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THE BLENHEIM RAPHAEL.

THE *Portfolio* states that the *Blenheim Raphael*, known as the *Ansidei Madonna*, has been purchased for the National Gallery at the enormous sum of £70,000. Great satisfaction has been expressed at this conclusion of the negotiations between the government and the Duke of Marlborough's trustees. It would have been a misfortune indeed if such a picture had been allowed to leave this country. We gave a great sum for the *Garvagh Raphael*, which was, indeed, relatively far dearer than this finer and more important panel. The composition of nearly life-size figures groups the enthroned Madonna with the Child on her knee; St. John Baptist and St. Nicholas of Bari on the other side. The color has the richness of Raphael while under the influence of Perugino; the style is of the early Florentine period, though, according to Vasari, the picture was begun in 1505, the date of that early fresco at Perugia, which foreshadowed the upper part of the learned *Disputa* in the Vatican *Stanza*. It was finished and signed in 1507, and placed in the chapel of the Ansidei family, dedicated to San Niccolò di Bari, in the Servite church of San Fiorenzo at Perugia. In 1764 it was replaced by a copy and bought by Lord Robert Spencer, who gave it to his brother, the then Duke of Marlborough. Lord Lansdowne was the central portion of the tripartite predella. The picture is in some senses unique, and in excellent preservation. For the National Collection is also secured, at the price of £17,500, the *Blenheim Vandyke* portrait of Charles I on horseback; and probably most people will feel the money well spent, although at Windsor is an equally fine equestrian portrait of the martyr king, and a replica at Hampton Court. The Rubens portraits of himself and his wife have been bought for a private collection abroad.

WORKS OF ART NOT "HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE."

WE learn from the *Magazine of Art*, "that about a year or more ago quite a ripple of excitement was raised in the art circles of Philadelphia by an attempt of the Assessors of Taxes to class works of art as taxable property, under the pretense that they were included in the term 'household furniture,' as used in the taxing act of April 29, 1844. This new construction, which had never occurred to any of the assessors before, was of course appealed from, but the Board of Revision of Taxes affirmed it. Mr. Lea, a well-known citizen of Philadelphia, thereupon carried the case into the courts, where it was argued before Judge Mitchell of the Court of Common Pleas. Judge Mitchell sustained the appeal of Mr. Lea, and the assessment was stricken off. The matter being one of general interest to all friends of art, we subjoin some extracts from the judge's opinion, as published in the *Legal Intelligencer*. 'Ornamentation,' says Judge Mitchell, 'is not furniture, though incidentally to its own purpose it may contribute to the idea of furnishing. 'The expression household furniture,' says Sawyer, J., in *Towns v. Pratt*, 33 N. H., 345, 'must be understood to mean those vessels, utensils, or goods which are designed in their

manufacture originally and chiefly for use in the family, as instruments of the household, and for conducting and managing household affairs.' Pictures are certainly not 'designed originally and chiefly for use in conducting and managing household affairs.' They are clearly not furniture in the artist's or even in the dealer's hands, as a table or a bureau would be in the hands of the manufacturer; nor would they probably be so considered, if bought and stored away in a closet or lumber room. Indeed, this view seems to have governed the assessors in the present matter, as we are informed that they did not assess as furniture, paintings, etc., hung in a separate room or gallery, intended for display only. Why, then, do they become furniture if hung in a parlor or other room not reserved exclusively for them but devoted to other household uses? Only, if at all, because in the progress of civilization and the development of the refining influences of art, there are now but few households, however humble, that are restricted to the bare necessities of life, and that have not some little contribution to the gratification of taste. In this sense pictures may be called household furniture, but this is not the popular sense of the word, nor is it the sense in which the legislature intended to use it. It lacks the idea of *household utility* that makes the basis of the definition of household furniture.... This conclusion is fortified by the construction universally put on the [taxing] act at the time of its passage. Some of the earlier American taxing acts used the word *household utensils*. . . and those which spoke of 'furniture' meant the same thing. For forty years the act has been understood and administered, by tax gatherer and tax payer alike, not to include paintings and similar objects. It is to be hoped that the exigencies of the State will never require the taxation of art, which all civilized men in all ages of the world have sought to encourage and develop; but if such a departure from established usage is to be made, it should be by a new and clear expression of the legislative will, not by a new reading of a statute nearly half a century old.' The assessors may now appeal to a higher court, but it is thought that they will not take such an unpopular step."

THE STATUE OF GEN. REYNOLDS,
PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER, 1884.

JOHN ROGERS' equestrian statue of General Reynolds was unveiled before a great crowd and amidst great enthusiasm, on September 17th. It stands before the new City Hall, opposite to, and visible from the whole length of Broad Street; a superb situation, but owing to the vast size of the building and the width of the street even this large figure is quite dwarfed.

Reynolds was distinctively a Pennsylvanian. He commanded only Pennsylvania troops; he was killed on Pennsylvania soil, and though he fell on the first day at Gettysburg, it was largely owing to his vigor and skilful dispositions, that the great battle resulted in the deliverance of Pennsylvania from the invaders.

The orator of the day was the same Gov. Curtin whose forethought enabled him to offer to the President a trained